

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHB 2948

As of February 22, 2018

Title: An act relating to the responsibilities for state routes in cities or towns.

Brief Description: Concerning the responsibilities for state routes in cities or towns.

Sponsors: Representatives Graves, Sullivan, Haler, Hargrove, Pike and Senn.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/13/18, 86-12.

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/22/18.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Raises the population threshold from 25,000 to 27,500, at which cities and towns must take over maintenance responsibilities of their streets that are part of the state highway system.
- Phases in three additional increases every five years up to a 35,000 population threshold by 2033.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Erica Bramlet (786-7321)

Background: Certain city streets are designated as part of the state highway system. Current law provides that in cities or towns with populations of 25,000 or less, the Department of Transportation (DOT) has the following maintenance responsibilities: slope stability, traffic control signals, signs, striping, lane marking, and channelization. Regardless of city or town population, DOT retains full responsibility for route markers and directional signs, along with all maintenance for limited access facilities.

Once a city or town's population is determined in the annual Office of Financial Management (OFM) process to have exceeded the 25,000 population threshold, the transfer of maintenance responsibilities takes effect three years from the date of determination. During this time cities and towns may plan for additional staffing, budgetary, and equipment requirements.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

A task force was created in 1991 to study the maintenance responsibilities of cities and towns and to reexamine the population threshold which had been in place since the 1950s. As a result of the task force's recommendations, the Legislature raised the population threshold in 1993 from 15,000 to 22,500. The Legislature again raised the population threshold in 2007, from 22,500 to 25,000.

As of the 2017 OFM estimates, eight cities or towns have a population between 25,000 and 35,000.

Summary of Bill: The population threshold at which cities and towns have to take over maintenance responsibilities of their streets that are part of the highway system is raised from 25,000 to 27,500. The threshold further increases to 30,000 in 2023; 32,500 in 2028; and 35,000 in 2033.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: There is support for the bill.

OTHER: This bill defers two cities from taking over maintenance activities, which would no longer allow DOT to start prioritizing other important maintenance activities in that region. The proposed incremental increases to the population threshold could also lead to some cities coming back under the threshold, which would have a fiscal impact to DOT in the out-years. If this happened, DOT's maintenance levels might not be up to the same standards as those cities who had already been doing their own maintenance.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Paul Graves, Prime Sponsor; Jim Hendrick, City of Maple Valley.

OTHER: Pasco Bakotich, State Maintenance Engineer.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: Shelly Helder, City of Kenmore; Jane Wall, Association of Washington Cities.